

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a
5 transaction, comprising:

determining a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;

obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer:

10 generating a random number based on said buyer-provided offset value;
and

rounding said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said random number, wherein said rounding is performed by said computer.

15 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number is performed by a third party to said transaction.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number is supervised by a third party to said transaction.

20 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of generating a random number further comprises the step of obtaining a seller-generated increment value.

25 5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a buyer commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a vending machine.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a buyer commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a trusted third party prior to the generation of said random number.

5 8. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is specified by the buyer in response to a query.

10 9. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a serial number obtained from paper currency provided by the buyer.

15 10. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a numeric identifier obtained from a product associated with said transaction.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the seller generated random number is made without access to said buyer-provided offset value.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a
20 transaction, comprising:

determining a purchase price, N.C, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost equal to C/100, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N;

obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

25 generating a random number based on said buyer-provided offset value;
and

rounding said purchase price up to a price of N+1 units with a probability of p and down to a price of N units with a probability of (1-p), wherein probability p equals C/100 and wherein said rounding is based on said generated random number and
30 is performed by said computer.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said step of generating a random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

5 14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a transaction, comprising:

10 determining a purchase price, N.C, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost equal to C/100, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N;

 receiving an amount of X units from a buyer, where X is greater than N;
 obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

15 generating a random number based on said buyer-provided offset value;
 and

 rounding said purchase price up to a price of X units with a probability of $((N + p) / X)$ and down to a price of zero units with a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$, wherein probability p equals C/100, and wherein said rounding is based on said generated random number and is performed by said computer.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said step of generating a random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

25 17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

18. (Currently Amended) A system for processing a transaction, comprising:

30 a memory that stores computer-readable code; and

a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to implement said computer-readable code, said computer-readable code configured to:

determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;

5 obtain a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

generate a random number based on said buyer-provided offset value; and

round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said random number.

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19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said random number is generated in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

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20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said processor is further configured to obtain a buyer commitment to the transaction.

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21. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase price, N.C, for said transaction includes a fractional cost equal to C/100, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N, and said purchase price is rounded up to a price of N+1 units with a probability of p and rounded down to a price of N units with a probability of (1-p), wherein probability p equals C/100.

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22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase price, N.C, for said transaction includes a fractional cost equal to C/100, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N and wherein an amount of X units is received from a buyer, where X is greater than N, and wherein said purchase price is rounded up to a price of X units with a probability of $((N + p) / X)$ and rounded down to a price of zero units with a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$, wherein probability p equals C/100.

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23. (Original) An article of manufacture for processing a transaction, comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

5 a step to determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;

a step to obtain a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

10 a step to generate a random number based on said buyer-provided offset value; and

a step to round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said random number.